

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants acknowledge receipt of the Office Action dated 12/27/2005. Claims 2, 4, 6, 7, 9-11, 16, 18 and 23 were pending in the application. Claims 9-11, 16 and 18 are allowed. Claims 2, 4, 7 and 23 are presented for reconsideration and further examination in view of the following remarks and arguments. Claim 6 has been canceled without prejudice.

Summary of Telephone Interview

Applicants thank the Examiner for clarifying the content of the Office Action during a telephone interview with the Applicants' representative on March 10, 2006. Applicants' representative contacted the Examiner to discuss what appeared to be typographical errors regarding the rejection of claim 7. The Office Action stated that claim 1 was rejected, however, claim 1 was previously canceled. The Examiner stated that this was a typographical error and the rejection of claim 1 was supposed to be claim 7. Additionally, the Office Action indicates that some claims which depend from claim 7 are allowable, but claim 7 itself was rejected. The Examiner stated that those dependent claims were supposed to be Objected to for being dependent upon a rejected base claim. Applicants again thank the Examiner for these clarifications.

Allowable Subject Matter

In the Office Action, as understood in light of the subsequent telephone interview, the Examiner stated that claims 9-11, 16 and 18 are allowed, and that claims 2, 4 and 6, which depend from claim 7, would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for this indication of allowable subject matter.

Remarks

By this Response and Amendment independent claim 7 has been amended to include allowable subject matter set forth in claim 6, thereby obviating its rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e); claim 23 has been amended to include allowable subject matter set forth in claim 2, thereby obviating its rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e); and claim 6 has been canceled.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected claims 7 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Cragun et al. (US Patent 5,859,662), hereinafter noted "Cragun."

The Examiner also rejected claims 7 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Menard et al. (US Patent 6,061,056), hereinafter noted "Menard."

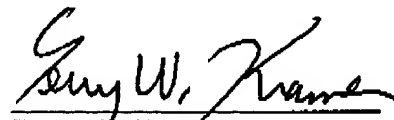
Applicants respectfully submit that claims 7 and 23, as amended, are patentable over the cited references because they now include the features previously set forth in claims 6 and 2, respectively, which were found allowable by the Examiner. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 7 and 23 under § 102(e) is respectfully requested.

It is submitted that claims 2 and 4 are also allowable because they depend from Claim 7, which is allowable over the cited art references based upon the above remarks. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections to these claims is also respectfully requested.

While we believe that the instant amendment places the application in condition for allowance, should the Examiner have any further comments or suggestions, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone the undersigned attorney in order to expeditiously resolve any outstanding issues.

In the event that the fees submitted prove to be insufficient in connection with the filing of this paper, please charge our Deposit Account Number 50-0578 and please credit any excess fees to such Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,
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